

Bedford School

13+/14+

Entrance Examination

Past Paper

English

One hour

Please ensure that answers are written on lined paper and using pen

Carefully read the following poem and answer the questions in as much detail as you can. Try to support your answers by using examples from the poem and examining the writer's use of language where appropriate.

Balloons

Since Christmas they have lived with us,
Guileless and clear,
Oval soul-animals,
Taking up half the space,
Moving and rubbing on the silk

Invisible air drifts,
Giving a shriek and pop
When attacked, then scooting to rest, barely trembling.
Yellow cathead, blue fish-----
Such queer moons we live with

Instead of dead furniture!
Straw mats, white walls
And these traveling
Globes of thin air, red, green,
Delighting

The heart like wishes or free
Peacocks blessing
Old ground with a feather
Beaten in starry metals.
Your small

Brother is making
His balloon squeak like a cat.
Seeming to see
A funny pink world he might eat on the other side of it,
He bites,

Then sits
Back, fat jug
Contemplating a world clear as water.
A red
Shred in his little fist.

Sylvia Plath

1. How does Plath make the balloons seem to be alive? (6 marks)
2. What effects do the balloons have on the people living in the house? (4 marks)
3. What thoughts does the poem convey to you? (5 marks)
4. Describe a memorable place for you and explain why you think it is so memorable.
Give careful thought to the quality of your writing. (10 marks)